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ABSTRACT

This report presents themes in the integration of intercultural civics instruction into elementary and secondary curricula, themes that emerged as points of disagreement and discussion at a teacher training seminar held in Romania. Following an opening section that describes the seminar's format and aims, a second section reviews the discussions of the definition of civics education. The third and fourth sections report discussions of the epistemological and pedagogical status of civics education and its aims. The fifth section discusses the content of civics education in terms of basic knowledge, skills, and values. Section 6 looks at means and methods, especially media education. Section 7 explores methods of evaluation and testing and the points of discussion and disagreement that surrounded this issue. Section 8 discusses the teacher's role, and Section 9 describes the sometimes heated debates on intercultural and European dimensions of civics education. The final section covers some problems for civics education in Central and Eastern Europe in the aftermath of totalitarian governments and the establishment of democracies. Four appendixes contain the workshop's introductory speech by Emil Paun, Ministry of Education; workshop reports; the seminar program; and a list of participants. (JB)

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Strategies for interculturally-oriented civics teaching at primary and secondary level

Timisoara (Romania), 17-20 December 1993

Seminar Report

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CDCC Teacher Bursaries Scheme
in collaboration with project
"Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities:
Educational and Cultural Aspects"

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Only questions related to national defence are excluded from the Council of Europe's work, and the Organisation has activities in the following areas: democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms; media and communication; social and economic affairs; education, culture, heritage and sport; youth; health; environment and regional planning; local democracy; and legal co-operation.

The **European Cultural Convention** was opened for signature in 1954. This international treaty is open to European countries that are not members of the Council of Europe, and it enables them to take part in the Organisation's programmes on education, culture, sport and youth. So far, 38 States have acceded to the European Cultural Convention: the Council of Europe's full member States plus Albania, Belarus, Croatia, the Holy See, Latvia, Russia.

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The CDCC's programmes are an integral part of the Council of Europe's work, and, like the programmes in other sectors, they contribute to the Organisation's three over-arching policy objectives for the 1990s:

- the protection, reinforcement and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and pluralist democracy;
- the promotion of an awareness of European identity;
- the search for common responses to the great challenges facing European society.

The CDCC's education programme covers school, higher and adult education, as well as educational research. At present, its main priorities are projects on: the European dimension of secondary education; university co-operation; adult education and social change; modern languages; and the pooling of the results of educational research.

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COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION (CDCC)
TEACHER BURSARIES SCHEME

Teacher Training Seminar
on the theme

"Strategies for interculturally-oriented civics teaching at primary and secondary level"

Timisoara, Romania, 17 - 20 December 1993

General Report

by

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1. Introduction

From 17 to 20 December 1993, the city of Timisoara hosted the teacher training seminar on "Strategies for interculturally-oriented civics teaching at primary and secondary level" organised by the CDCC in cooperation with the Timisoara Intercultural Institute as part of the CDCC Teacher Bursaries Scheme. The objectives of the seminar were as follows :

a. to analyse the aims of civics education from an intercultural perspective;

b. to examine the various contexts of civics education (in particular, the school in relation to the family, the media, peer groups and communities);

c. to define a didactic approach to civics education based on case studies and real-life situations;

d. to prepare participants to take part in developing an experimental civics education programme within their own field of teaching, in their classrooms, over the first quarter of 1994.

Participants included civics education teachers at both primary and secondary levels, as well as individuals with responsibility for determining **curricula**.

Four papers given by experts served as a fulcrum for the working programme.

These papers were followed by debates in the working groups (one Francophone, one Anglophone, and one bilingual) and in the plenary sessions, over the course of which the problems of teaching/learning civics in various contexts were examined. Objectives, content, methodological choices and constraints were all covered in detail.

This report has been compiled to present the themes which polarised most discussions, namely the integration of civics instruction into curricula and what some participants termed "the didactics of civics education". This scholastic orientation was in evidence throughout, and can be explained by the composition of the three groups of participants which, as mentioned above, comprised individuals actively involved in teaching at primary and secondary levels. Thankfully, this professional slant did not prevent participants from taking the social and political context of civics education into account, from an intercultural perspective.

2. Civics education - definition

This term exists in every language, frequently appearing in official documents, where apparent consensus governs its use. On closer analysis, however, one cannot but notice that things are not so simple. This was why participants in the Timisoara seminar felt, and repeatedly expressed, the need to step back and examine terminology-related questions from a certain distance.

Nonetheless, most participants accepted the definition put forward at the beginning by one of the speakers: "Civics education is the educational area which, within a school framework, hands on the rules of communal life to tomorrow's adults" (François Audigier). This definition, centred on the school and on the progressive interaction of the individual and

society, was felt to be more appropriate than many to be found in dictionaries of education. A few of these are reproduced below, by way of example :

- "the totality of the means employed, first, to enable the child and the adolescent to become aware of the rights and duties of the individual as a member of society, and second, to train the pupil in the practice of these duties in the small societies of which he or she is a part"[1];

- "education that seeks to develop in youth a sincere and conscientious acceptance of the responsibilities of citizenship"[2];

- "the position of the explicitly stated and implicitly expressed curriculum of educational institutions which socialises individuals to membership in their political community"[3].

We note that this search for **minimal terminological consensus** is no accident, but rather an expression of the need for conceptual clarification and theoretical reflection with a view to identifying a common language in a field characterised by much controversy.

Apart from the diversity of wording in use in different countries ("civic apprenticeship", "introduction to democratic life", "moral-civic education", "learning citizenship", "social studies", "education for democracy" etc.), debate on the epistemological and didactic status of civics education should not, despite its prevalence, lead us to lose sight of the fact that the term in question has a solid underlay of certitude and consensus. We feel it is important to cite several such points :

a. civics education is a process of progressive acquisition of rules and norms governing relations between the individual and society;

b. civics education is a complex process entailing comprehension of how democratic society functions, and the gradual exercise of the responsibilities and obligations arising from life in a community;

c. civics education is based on defining the fundamental values and concepts of democratic citizenship.

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[1].P. Foulquié, **Dictionnaire de la langue pédagogique**, Paris, P.U.F., 1971, p. 164

2. C.V. Good, W.R. Merkel (eds.) **Dictionary of Education**, New York, McGraw Hill Book Co., 1973, p. 99

3.J. Torney, **Civics Education**. In : T. Husén, N. Postlethwaite (eds.) **International Encyclopedia of Education**, Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1985, vol. II, p. 725

3 Civics education - epistemological and pedagogical status

Civics education has not been part of the **curriculum** for long; in fact, it was only introduced at the beginning of the century, and did not really establish itself in the school system until the post-war period, from 1945 onwards. The '60s and '70s saw an upsurge of interest in the subject, as have the '90s. Despite the limited class time allocated to it (generally 1-2 hours per week), civics education is very important, as attested by ongoing lively debate on its place within school activities as a whole, and the means by which it should be pursued.

There was no lack of debate of this kind at Timisoara. One of the topics most discussed by participants - who, it should be borne in mind, are directly involved in teaching citizenship - was the status of civics education in the curriculum. This was because many of them felt that the customary institutional/educational context in which it occurs, namely primary and secondary schools, is not always suited to this somewhat particular discipline.

This type of discussion brings us to the broader debate, which is far from being resolved, concerning the **epistemological and pedagogical status of civics education**.

For some, civics education is an ongoing human project involving social institutions and the community as a whole. From this point of view, the school is only one of the institutions involved, its educative influence thereby a limited one, its social and pedagogical organisation sometimes incompatible with education for democratic life. Strict academic ritual, the rigid framework of curriculum, timetables and examinations, the relationship of authority established between teachers and taught do not, in effect, provide an ideal democratic model appropriate to education for citizenship. Moreover, they claim, school culture is of a preponderantly cognitive nature, relatively incompatible with the socio-affective aims of civics education.

A greater number of participants held the contrasting view that school, with its programmes, is the ideal place for implementing education in citizenship, quoting, among others, Dewey, who maintained that the classroom is, or must become, a democratic society in miniature. Moreover, in this day and age the school is accessible to the entire population, an institution within whose walls a good part of its time, at least during the years of compulsory attendance, is spent. Let us add to these considerations the fact that the school is the only educative environment in which the teaching process is open to systematic development, because only here is it equipped with precise objectives and content. It is also the sole educative environment which has trained professionals at its disposal to make connections and to integrate civics education with related disciplines.

Yet difficulties arise in relation to educative decision-making when it comes to fitting civics education into the existing **curriculum**. Participants outlined the three models which predominate in the majority of European countries:

a. civics education is taught as an entirely separate subject (at secondary level); this is the preferred approach in most of Europe;

b. civics education is covered through other subjects (as in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, and Great Britain);

c. civics education is covered in interdisciplinary modules centred on specific problems; in this case, the important thing is not the existence of a separate **curriculum**, but the overall configuration of the problems to be resolved (experiments of this kind are to be found in Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, the Czech Republic, and France).

Whatever the current approach in the various systems, participants in the Timisoara seminar were unanimous in recommending a more strongly trans- and inter- disciplinary approach. In fact civics education spans the entire curriculum and its spirit should permeate the organisation of both school and out-of-school activities.

With regard to the **mode of knowledge** underlying civics education, it was emphasised that this is less concerned with "scientific" facts than with attitudes, social practices, and everyday experience. Civics education nevertheless remains a discipline of self-examination demanding synthesis and a critical outlook. It is not "handed" to the learner as a generous gift from adults/teachers, but rather constructed through progressive interaction between the individual/pupil and the community to which s/he belongs. Civics education is not intended to provide "recipes", ready-made formulas for rapid socialisation. Its brief is rather to sow the seeds of a gradual discovery of the rules of social life, norms, and democratic participation. Civics education is a discipline working towards the emancipation of the subject (Mollenhauer), bringing him to crucial realisations (Freire); it is, in short, a "critical science of society" (Adorno).

From this point of view it is important to point out the distinction made by some speakers (Dakmara Georgescu and Jiri Kotasek) between **civics education** on the one hand, and **civic socialisation** on the other. While civic socialisation entails the non-systematic learning process which is the involuntary, functional result of daily interaction in a range of educative environments (such as the family, peer groups, the media), civics education draws on explicit, systematic intervention targeted on precise objectives. While both involve a process of **inculturation** (adaptation to given social structures), this is nonetheless achieved in different ways in accordance with the particular objectives assigned to the two procedures.

This is the crux of the dilemma highlighted by the participants: should education for citizenship be founded on civic socialisation (the individual's integration into a given social environment), or on civics education (which goes beyond a simple adaptation to society as it is and includes, in addition to inculturation, encouragement in critical thinking, independence of spirit - indeed, a desire to transform the existing social order)? In emphasising these aspects, a good number of participants concluded that their objectives are not contradictory, but complementary. In reality, the epistemological specificity of this novel discipline known as civics education lies precisely in its interweaving of the integrative and the critical which is proper to education for democracy.

4. Civics Education : Aims

As the challenges facing our societies multiply, we are witnessing a concurrent **significant rise in the demand for civics education**. This message emerges from the papers given by François Audigier and Roy Williams, and was also highlighted in the conclusions of the respective working groups. Moreover, one of the most earnestly debated topics at Timisoara was the question to what degree civics education, as a school subject with limited resourcing, might contribute to **solving the problems of our societies**.

Democracies are sometimes proving fragile, and we are witnessing an alarming resurgence of extremism and chauvinism arising from mounting crises of identity and ethnic conflict. Ever since these trends emerged, people have rightly been asking if these problems, with their powerful historical, political and cultural roots, might be usefully regulated through the medium of education. Of particular interest to us is the narrower question : to what degree can this discipline, with what is after all a particular status all its own, contribute to reinforcing democracy? It must certainly be pointed out that, despite expectations, civic education is incapable of **directly** resolving the new challenges facing post-industrial societies, or of regulating the problems specific to post-totalitarian ones. It would be a delusion to expect 40 or 50 class-hours of civics education over the course of the school year, however effective and appealing, to instantly transform the social relations, institutions, and thinking patterns of the whole of a society's civic culture. As one of the speakers put it, "civic instruction is neither the sole nor the best remedy for social ills" (Jiri Kotasek). Be that as it may, there is consensus that citizenship training is essential, given that it lays the foundations of all genuine culture. It is apprenticeship in citizenship which enables the individual to comprehend society, because it develops critical thinking along with a clear appreciation of basic human rights. Without civic education, individuals as well as communities would be less open to an understanding of communal life, would lack a minimal grasp of society and how it functions - in short, these individuals and communities would have a far poorer worldview.

While everyone agrees that civics education is indispensable in the new European context, seeking consensus on the aims to be assigned to this discipline is no easy task.

Generally speaking, options vary according to the political choices, value systems, and priorities of the society in question.

In consequence, it would have been difficult to compile a standard list of aims to suit a group as heterogeneous as that assembled at Timisoara, of civics teachers from a number of European countries. At the same time, we can profitably retain the classification grid put forward by François Audigier with regard to the aims of civic education :

a. **culture- and heritage-related objectives** aimed at transmitting a shared portrayal of the world, of society, and of social relations (emphasising pupils' own membership and participation);

b. **critical objectives** aiming to help pupils distance themselves from these by encouraging constant questioning of received truths and a recognition of the relative nature of social representations and consensus;

c. **practical objectives** emphasising the development of behaviour, practices and attitudes which are not in contradiction with professed values.

This classification was completed by various participants in accordance with their own experience and cultural context of origin. Thus, we can usefully retain the following points as a basis for further development of this theme :

- imparting essential basic knowledge to enable the pupil to decipher society and the world in which we live;

- preparing children and adolescents to become citizens capable of understanding and exercising the rights and responsibilities which are theirs as members of a community and of a state founded on the rule of law;

- stimulating attitudes conducive to negotiation, dialogue, and civic debate between parties representing different identities, interests, and experiences;

- developing a critical spirit and the ability to relativise models and truths; training in personal reflection and in public-mindedness;

- training groups and communities in communication and cooperation skills; encouraging the ability to share responsibility and decision-making;

- teaching the rules of life in a community, developing civic attitudes and the life-skills and knowledge proper to democratic citizenship;

- understanding, and conveying understanding of, the values underlying democratic behaviour;

- learning to "decode" the behaviour of others, and to live in increasingly multi-ethnic, multi-cultural societies;

- reinforcing the European dimension and the idea of shared reference; learning to reconcile the demands of integration with value attached to specific identities;

- understanding democracy as civic coexistence, as a social practice governed by the ethics of citizenship.

5. Civics Education : Content

Any school subject matter aspiring to a recognised curricular identity must define itself in terms of specific content. Does this apply to civic education? Is there not a risk that, in reducing it to fit the narrow mould of particular content, its scope will be limited and its significance diminished? Is traditional teaching, with its familiar constraints and the priority it attaches to the transmission of facts, compatible with apprenticeship in citizenship? Is it possible, in the end, to reduce the whole of society's democratic culture to a series of specific, monodisciplinary contents?

To answer these questions we must go back to the question asked earlier about the epistemological construction of civics education. In contrast to the deductive materials of ready-structured sciences such as biology, physics, mathematics and history, civic education brings together diverse monodisciplinary contents, particularly from the autonomous social sciences (law, sociology, ethics, economy, political science, social psychology), thereby conferring on them a new epistemological identity. Linked around new objectives and specific problems to be solved, heterogeneous content becomes integrated within a coherent educational project with its own specific aims. In the process, the component strands of knowledge lose their original identity; they are no longer bits of law, sociology, or history, but content proper to civic instruction. Herein lies the genesis specific to the new

socio-humanities at the crossroads of traditional sciences, a process Jean Piaget calls "structural interdisciplinarity". This is what occurred in the case of cybernetics, ecology, and cognitive science, among others.

From this ensue certain characteristics of the contents of this "new science" of civic education, the fruit of structural interdisciplinarity :

a. the **internal coherence** of this discipline is less rigorous than is characteristically the case in more traditional teaching subjects;

b. the accent is on **problems to be solved** rather than on the "internal logic of the science itself". What predominates is not the acquisition of knowledge per se, but a pragmatic perspective guiding civic conduct acceptable by the norms and values of a given society;

c. the content of civics education as a school subject is **very dynamic**, being geared more towards social action than abstract knowledge, more towards the solution of problems than the acquisition of academic insight. Content reflects social expectations and ongoing change within civic codes and rules, and in this way conveys the dynamic of the problems to be solved;

d. the content of civic education is **more dependent on informal and non-formal teaching** than is the case with other branches of learning. In fact it is difficult to dissociate didactic content proper from similar, parallel or complementary activities in other civic education environments: the family, student associations, the media, peer groups, communities, and so on. This means that civic education is not a linear process of teaching - learning - evaluation progressing via an agglutination of new information. It is more a question of a constellation of direct practice and experience interpreted and clarified by means of a system of (sometimes contradictory) guiding concepts and values arising simultaneously from a range of sources.

What exactly is to be taught during civics classes? At the risk of oversimplifying, we may identify three interdependent types of content:

a. **Basic knowledge** about society and how it functions; the constitutional state, and institutions; the economic, administrative and political processes of a given society. The point is to attain a fundamental "threshold level" if we wish to propagate a civic culture, or at least "civic literacy" (Crick and Porter) among young learners. This must be centred on basic concepts and essential knowledge relating to everyday life: the concrete mechanisms ensuring the dynamism of democratic institutions; some understanding of the law; a knowledge of the rights and duties characterising civic behaviour; how business, the tax system, political institutions, administrative formalities, the rules governing the voluntary sector etc. function; public health, the highway code, protection of the environment, and so on.

Needless to say the **development of concepts** plays an important role in structuring this heterogeneous information. We know that these intellectual tools, the importance of which has been conclusively demonstrated, take shape gradually thanks to judicious

interlinking of generalisations. Concepts become the basic references of civic education programmes, and a whole range of specialised knowledge may be constructed around them. In illustration, we shall cite the civics syllabus in use in the Czech Republic. According to Professor Jiri Kotasek, this new programme rests on two conceptual axes:

- the **horizontal axis** from which spread a series of ever-broader conceptual circles: from "home" as the starting point pupils go on to discover "the family", "the region", "our country", with the accent on the progressive socialisation of the individual pupil;

- the **vertical axis** which reveals the hierarchical relationship between the individual and the community, encompassing personal emancipation as well as the anthropological and critical dimensions of civic education. Obviously, it is along this vertical axis that the second set of concepts (individual/group, community/state) is arranged.

Combining the two series, we obtain four core concepts around which all other civics education content, as taught in the first stage of secondary school in the Czech Republic, is organised:

- home/family (first year of secondary education);
- the country and the state (second year of secondary education);
- the individual : rights and duties (third year of secondary education);
- human communities (fourth year of secondary education).

b. **Skills** (know-how, practical skills, and life skills) comprise the second type of content transmitted by civics education. Learning citizenship is associated with the development of certain abilities such as critical thought, communication skills, receptiveness towards others, the conscious effort to see things from another point of view, a spirit of initiative, autonomy, the ability to negotiate and to resolve conflicts peacefully through civic debate, the delegation of authority. To quote Henk Dekker, who has studied this problem, civics education is less a body of knowledge than an **ethos**, a day-to-day practice founded on know-how, practical skills, and life skills in a democracy.

c. **Values** are of assistance in making sense of collective life. It is values which give the individual his reasons for living and, consequently, enduring guidelines. Democratic citizenship carries with it, among other things, a kernel of abiding values from which democratic conduct derives its meaning and direction : the exercise of, and respect for, human rights; religious, ethnic, racial and cultural tolerance; pluralism, solidarity, collective responsibility, civic coexistence, critical freedom, etc. These values are common to all democratic societies, but their relative weight in a given context depends on contingent political choices. To give but one example, a recent survey carried out by Monica Taylor for the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales, with the support of UNESCO, collected responses from 26 European countries, 8 of them in Central and Eastern Europe. These responses reveal the order of priorities in the areas covered, in accordance with the ten values identified

as indicative of democratic functioning, and which constitute, in effect, a scale of relevance to the question under consideration. According to this survey, citizenship, democracy, and national consciousness, in that order, are the three values most favoured by the authorities in Central and Eastern Europe, whereas in Western Europe intercultural education, international understanding, and anti-racism, in that order, are the priority values of civics education. We may suppose that the political options behind this ordering of priorities are also reflected in a diversity of content conveyed by education in these values.

Is there any point in reducing training in values to a **didactic transmission**? This is another important question of direct relevance to the content of civics education. In this respect, it is well to bear in mind that values must be taught in a particular manner, given that these transcend day-to-day knowledge and practice precisely in that they are inferred from axiologically significant experience.

From this perspective it is relatively simple to achieve consensus on fundamental values; translating these abstract terms into norms of social conduct is a more demanding task. Pragmatic interpretation is even more difficult in those increasingly fragmented societies in which social ties are dissolving : conflicts of identity, inter-generational conflict, conflict between traditional values and modern ones, conflict arising out of transition from one political system to another... the list could go on and on.

6. Means and methods

Unquestionably, the introduction of civic education into school curricula is a response to the desire to teach and to impart - in other words to pass on - specific content. But it is also and above all an expression of a wish to **reactivate the educative mission of the school institution**. In effect, the school is often at the receiving end of sharp criticism for being too tied up in knowledge for its own sake; it is accused of ignoring its primordial educative mission and focussing instead on formal programmes, attaching excessive importance to certification of studies and the quantitative aspects of institutional functioning to the detriment of the moulding of character, interpersonal relations, and education proper.

It must be pointed out that civics education does not take place in a vacuum or in artificial isolation, but rather within a broad social context which must be considered in both its dimensions. On the one hand, there is the **social microcosm** of the scholastic institution itself, with its own specific social relations, its own particular rules in accordance with the codes and norms of conduct established within it. On the other hand, the school is but a single thread in the **vast social fabric** within which each entity exercises its own system of civic influences.

This being the case, it is easy to understand the school's dual need to establish a consistency on the one hand with its own internal organisation and, on the other, with the often contradictory messages emanating from other educative environments. The school has a community life of its own. Broadly speaking, this reproduces the problems and structures of the life of society as a whole : civic coexistence governed by shared, recognised rules; voluntary activities; multicultural, multiracial organisation. Within the school there may be a system of collective decision-making (such as the "Pupils' Parliament" in Poland,

Switzerland and France), electoral mechanisms, indeed even experiments in self-management. From this perspective, civics education classes must be accompanied by a **pedagogy of daily experience** capable of turning to account all of the significant situations arising within the life of the establishment : intercultural encounters, hierarchies, festivities, conflicts, personal crises, cases of failure and deviance, and so on. In their own way, these day-to-day situations write a text, the civic sense of which can be deciphered with the aid of knowledge acquired in civic education courses.

Yet the school is not the only institution exerting a social influence on the minds of the young. In fact civic life begins in earliest infancy, within the bosom of the family, and spans the whole of the **education system** : kindergarten, primary and secondary schools, and higher education, in business, professional associations, sports clubs, political institutions, trade unions - in short, in the ongoing practice of citizenship. In consequence, civics education is an uninterrupted process traversing diverse social environments and institutions. The problem arising in this context is that of the **contiguity of moral and civic messages**. In reality each of the institutions exerting a social influence employs specific means in accordance with its own particular objectives.

The school's relationship to the media, which was analysed at length over the course of the Timisoara conference (cf. notably the paper given by Roy Williams) should be mentioned in this context. This relationship may take a variety of forms : complementarity, cooperation, interaction - but also competition and divergency. In principle, the school and the media are quite different institutions. The school specialises in the transmission of official codes, selected by criteria as educational as they are political, whereas the media are freer, more spontaneous in the sense that they present information in its crude state, only partially pre-selected, to be structured simultaneously as it is consumed by the public. While the school is obliged to uphold the official civic culture (whether it wants to or not), the media are, at least in principle, less constrained. By the same token, the civic messages conveyed by the school are subordinate to a pre-defined ethic, while the media do not always observe this moral imperative. Finally, the school operates as a direct factor in civic socialisation, while the media influence is an indirect one.

Yet despite these dissimilarities, the media contribute as much as the schools do to building a democratic culture. The schools and the media should not operate as contradictory communicative sources, particularly in view of the growing influence of the latter on social life. All things considered, it is up to the school to adapt itself to the (often contradictory and competitive) dynamics of this relationship. It is precisely for this reason that civic education must include **media education** capable of preparing adolescents for a civic culture dominated by the means of mass communication. The learner must be shown how to make choices, how to filter information through the prism of criticism, how to make profitable use of alternative information sources, to accept pluralism and to elude the snares of manipulation and indoctrination. Now more than ever it is vital to encourage young people to interpret experience and information within the broad guidelines of an ethic built on strongly motivating values.

This brings us to the question - keenly debated at Timisoara - of a **teaching approach appropriate to the aims and objectives of civic education**. Many participants endeavoured

to single out the principles of civic education as a school subject, while others turned their attention to identifying teaching methods.

In terms of **principles** - for these are where we must start - it is important to :

a. base teaching on first-hand experience;

b. make use of significant situations;

c. progressively introduce conceptualisation based on factual experience;

d. assert the function of models and of personal example;

e. highlight the contiguity of the civic messages conveyed within the school, and outside of it.

Some participants, by contrast, favoured a more flexible methodological approach to be worked out, spontaneously as it were, in the classroom itself, with pupil participation and no predetermined pedagogical scenario.

With regard to **teaching methods**, here too there was strong insistence on the need for a variety of approaches, dismissing from the start the constrictive concept of "*the* right method", the formulas and strategies masquerading as panaceas. Participants affirmed time and time again that, in effect, any method that makes it possible to achieve the goals set is an effective one. At the same time, participants' accounts of their own experiences revealed the priority accorded, in many educational spaces, to the use of official texts as authentic documents, resolving problematic situations (especially those susceptible to contradictory solutions), the use of projects, simulation, and guided dialogue.

Participants reached the conclusion that, whatever the method employed, the important thing is to encourage the learner to conceptualise, think critically, and undertake a personal analysis of the triggering situation. What counts the most, it was asserted, is the interpretation of the educational situation created in the classroom, the collective search for meaning rather than didactic construction per se. The crux of this search lies in drawing connections between the civic and the ethical.

7. Evaluation and verification

As a general rule, and in accordance with the logic of certification, the courses enjoying the greatest prestige among both pupils and parents are those whose authority is affirmed through examinations. These are the core or main subjects. Trailing behind them, with a limited allocation of class time, come the "minor" ones.

Civics education is not among the disciplines subject to an end of year or end of cycle examination. Nor does it figure in the selection processes for secondary or university entry.

It does not, therefore, enter into the definition of diplomas. Nonetheless, civic education is an important subject of which far more is expected than it can reasonably

provide. As for evaluating the effects of apprenticeship in citizenship, these are not susceptible to direct assessment by formal test or examination. To properly evaluate the effects of such training, we would have to take account of, and closely analyse, real situations involving conflicts to be solved, responsibilities to assume, rules to observe, intercultural complementarities to affirm.

Understandably, participants in the Timisoara conference turned their attentions to **the effectiveness of the current evaluation system** with regard to civic education. There is no ignoring that this system is geared almost exclusively towards cognitive acquisition, and that the assessment of observable, measurable behaviour is not entirely compatible with the socio-affective objectives of civics education. It may well happen that a pupil "learns" (memorises, imitates, reproduces) civic education information, without ever putting it into practice in daily life. As most participants remarked, the transition from theory to practice, from knowledge to its application (know-how, practical skills, life skills, the ability to evolve) is more difficult in this than in any other subject taught in school. It is worth mentioning the question put at the Timisoara conference to the representative of an association of Romania's gypsy minority : if one had had the resources to reach the community concerned in time, to what extent could the knowledge conveyed by civic education have contributed to averting the interethnic conflict at Hadareni? To participants' great surprise, the response was negative : the conflict in question was a long time in the making, a product of intolerance and discrimination, cultural rejection and civic non-participation by the gypsy population compounded over a period of centuries.

This example paved the way for discussions on the effectiveness of civic education as a taught subject. Participants felt that it was advisable to develop a **specific evaluation system** with the emphasis on attitudes and skills, on the ability to solve real problems and to convert knowledge and values into standards of everyday behaviour.

8. The teacher's role

One of the most important outcomes of the Timisoara conference was the commitment of the majority of participants to creating - starting with the first quarter of 1994 - a network of **pilot schools** in which civic education is taught from an intercultural perspective. Some participants hoped to approach this task through an amalgam of interdisciplinary modules associated with current teaching programmes. Others felt it would be useful to break up the course into a series of sequential lessons and chapters closely following civic education programmes, particularly at secondary level where civic education figures as a subject in its own right. Still others were of the opinion that an intercultural approach must be introduced into all subjects throughout the curriculum, without fragmenting it into individual disciplines.

Obviously each teacher will be able to organise his or her work in accordance with the methodological options of their choice. In our opinion the most important thing is the **desire for regional and sub-regional cooperation** evinced by the participants. More precisely, it is a matter of direct cooperation between practitioners, and between schools; this may take the form of exchanging teaching materials/documentation, or more concretely of joint projects.

The Timisoara seminar was itself felt to be an experience in intercultural education,

due to the intercultural context in which it took place. It is well to point out that the Banat region has long provided an example of remarkable tolerance and civic coexistence. Backed by this tradition, the Timisoara Intercultural Institute fulfilled its function admirably, and, participants felt, proved itself as an ideal venue for future meetings of this kind. In this context, the Council of Europe was congratulated on its initiative in organising the seminar on civics education in Timisoara. We would like to hope that developments arising out of it, and perpetuating the spirit of the seminar, will benefit in equal measure from Council of Europe support. It is perhaps by incorporating this type of activity into the "**Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities : Educational and Cultural Aspects**" project that it can best be assured a fruitful future.

9. The intercultural and European dimensions

It will come as no surprise that the debates both during plenary sessions and in the workshops gave pride of place to the intercultural approach and to the European dimension. Participants endeavoured to discover the **most appropriate strategies** for an intercultural pedagogy that will transcend caricatures and stereotypes founded on prejudice and on ego-, socio-, and ethno-centric arrogance. Civics education must adapt to the open world in which we live, with its multilingual and multicultural complexity and its explosion of transnational media multiplying communication opportunities at a phenomenal rate. This European expansion, in line with the logic of global internationalisation, clearly calls for a new civic spirit founded in shared references and on the need to live together in an open society which is accessible to all. It is not simply a matter of ratifying new, more or less "European", terms and thus naturalising information on other cultures, but rather a question of an entirely original educational approach founded on broader entities with more assertive integrative power, as well as on a concept which has been gaining ground in the public imagination for some time, namely **European citizenship**.

An interesting debate around this theme enabled participants to tackle the relationship between **homogenisation - differentiation**. Some saw the school as being called upon to become a focal point for moral cohesion and the search for commonality, for that which unites and gives meaning to groups and to societies; in this view, interculturality is conceived as a common language founded on shared concepts, norms, and values. For others, by contrast, the school should be a place for multicultural, multi-ethnic encounters in which pupils learn to coexist without losing their own identity. Interpreted from this angle, interculturality would be a useful means of protecting declining minority cultures and languages on the wane, an opportunity for
minorities to exercise their rights through their youngest representatives. Some participants felt it necessary to point out the dangers of wanting at all costs to build a forced interculturality for which minority cultures may be insufficiently prepared. For this reason they insisted on the need to adapt interculturality to the specificities of the community in question.

Unsurprisingly, discussion around this theme was very heated. In the end, a consensus was reached on the necessity of "unity in diversity".

10. Civics education in Central and Eastern Europe - some problems

If we were to retain but a single message from all of the debate that took place at the Timisoara seminar, it might be this : **democracy is never a once-and-for-all achievement**. This is as true for the new European democracies as it is for the established ones.

In order to preserve democracy and adapt it to new conditions, a state of permanent vigilance is required to guard against the return of the ancient demons of chauvinism, extremism, nationalism, racism, anti-semitism and aggression. Civic education provides teaching tools to European societies concerned with developing democracy and consolidating its achievements.

If this message is valid with regard to the established Western democracies, it is all the more relevant for the post-totalitarian societies of Central and Eastern Europe. In these countries, the difficulties associated with civic education are on a scale with the expectations attached to it : lack of specialised teaching staff, shortage of suitable teaching materials, absence of extracurricular civics education structures, etc. This is due to the impact of the post-1989 change of paradigm on the social disciplines in general, among them civic education : an abrupt transformation from a study of political doctrine founded on a totalitarian ideology, to training people for life in a free society founded on pluralism and the concept of the rule of law.

This change of paradigm is very clearly spelled out in the preamble to the first post-Communist programme for civic education in the Czech Republic (1991) :

"The principal upheaval in the definition of citizenship training today is to be found in the relationship between the State and the citizen. Hitherto, the State was the manifestation of a clearly defined social order, and its superiority over the individual citizen was absolute. As a result, education was geared towards encouraging the individual to serve the regime. At present, by contrast, **education in citizenship must no longer orientate citizens towards the exclusive service of the State, but rather guide individuals towards fulfilment in life**. The primary and inalienable mission of education in citizenship is to make young people aware that they are free beings, and that freedom is synonymous with both dignity and responsibility, in day-to-day decisions as in major ones."

Faced with this reforming mission, civics education teachers from post-totalitarian countries emphasised the difficult conditions under which they exercise their profession. In addition to the shortages outlined above, they described the climate of disenchantment and confusion confronting them, given that the immediate effects of democratic transformation neither measure up to expectations nor tally with the noble principles they teach their pupils. Against a background of disorientation, despair, and the impoverishment of popular political culture, there emerges the risk of seeing the language of public-spiritedness and liberalism transformed into a new, rigid idiom of dogma and slogans - a trend which, in extreme cases, might engender new ideological monsters.

All of these factors contributed to placing the problems faced by countries in transition, at the heart of debate. The participants expressed a wish to develop new projects capable of coping with the specificities of countries in transition.

They also hoped that opportunities for communication, cooperation and interaction with civics education teachers from other countries, will increase.

APPENDIX I

Introductory speech by Prof. Emil Paun
Director of In-service Training, Ministry of Education, Bucharest

THE PEDAGOGY OF DEMOCRACY

1. DEMOCRATISING EDUCATION OR EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY?

Democratising education is a political and ideological move. Is there any such thing as democratic teaching methods, or non-democratic ones? I believe such a stance is nonsensical. In reality, education is a science and, as such, neither democratic nor non-democratic. If we look into pedagogical analyses regarding the aims of education, then certainly philosophical and even ideological considerations come into it. Even so, the interpretations and oppositions entailed are not of a democratic/non-democratic order, despite the fact that, underlying the goals of education, there is always a philosophical (that is, ideological) concept of humanity to be trained and educated, and different, covert, agendas.

If we take account of the normative aspects of education, of the rules, norms, and general didactic strategies it puts forward for running the teaching process, the philosophical side of things becomes very blurred, and we find ourselves talking in rather technical terms.

The pedagogy of democracy. What is meant by this phrase? What I am about to say is a personal point of view, and therefore open to debate and amendment - but I will take the risk. For a start, we can conceptualise the pedagogy of democracy in a broader perspective, taking account of the socio-political reference system in which educative measures take place. From this perspective, we may speak of education in, or of, a democratic society. This is a very important point, especially during a period of transition towards democracy.

If we accept the existence of an educative dimension to social development and change, emphasising the important role education plays in this process, then we can say that the pedagogy of democracy means a new approach to teaching in a democratic context, as much with regard to goals as to methods of realising them. This implies redefining the aims of education and fundamental concepts concerning the moulding of the personality in this new context, but also a different approach to the means and methods of achieving these new aims. From this point of view, the pedagogy of democracy can be seen as the democratic changes required in education in response to the need for democratising society.

In a more limited sense, we can conceive the pedagogy of democracy as an educational approach in the school taking account of the need for democratisation of the school as an institution. In this instance, analysis must be undertaken at a number of levels:

1. The organisational level

This entails the democratisation of teaching structures, the most important aspects of which are as follows : decentralising the organisation and management of the teaching system, rendering school structures and procedures more flexible, opening up school structures vertically and horizontally, the free circulation of pupils in the various structures and levels

of the teaching system, the introduction of alternative school structures.

It is also necessary to increase the autonomy and responsibility of schools inspectors and principals with regard to decision-making and the implementation of education reform programmes.

Democratising the teaching system is an important priority as much with regard to access to the various branches of education as to the learning and teaching and process proper.

Equality of opportunity must become one of the guiding principles of the education system. I do not think it is necessary to dwell on the various interpretations of this concept; the important thing is to implement it in the schools.

It is also important to democratise the school as a social institution. Two-way flow between it and the local community (the family, local government, etc.) must become fundamental to its functioning. The school must become a cultural centre for the community at large, attracting adults, offering programmes of continuing education and vocational training. I wish to emphasise these aspects, because up to now our schools have been geared primarily to teaching activities with the pupils.

2. The functional level

A number of points could be covered in relation to this, but I am going to underline two that I feel are particularly important.

2.1 First of all, with regard to what we might term the **democratisation of the school curriculum**, three points I regard as essential :

- democratising access to knowledge;
- broadening the range of, and access to, sources of information;
- new curricula.

In my country, Romania, decisions regarding the various aspects of the curriculum were always a matter for the Ministry of Education. Decision-making was very centralised, and so was curriculum development. The result was an over-standardised curriculum, with the whole of each teaching cycle throughout the country using the same textbooks and following the same programme and study plan. Access to knowledge was thus very standardised. This resulted in a unilateralisation of information sources, in other words to a school monopoly of the curriculum. Interdisciplinarity was also limited, and the pupil's contact with information was nearly always indirect, through the intermediary of the teacher and the school.

Significant change is therefore called for : greater flexibility in the school curriculum and a degree of decentralisation in determining it, broadening and diversification of sources of knowledge (through extracurricular and non-school sources), the introduction of optional subjects, alternative textbooks, and new courses (ecology studies, education in human rights, etc.).

2.2 The **democratisation of classroom management** is an important aspect of the pedagogy of democracy. There are four basic aspects to consider :

- democratising school life;
- democratising the teacher-pupil relationship;
- the use of active learning methods;
- democratising in-class communication.

Time constraints prevent me from analysing each of these in detail, so I will simply stress a couple of points.

The basis of democratising classroom management is, of course, the democratisation of school life in general. Herein lies a very important issue.

School life is a very complex reality, beginning with what we may term the bureaucratic dimension (the administrative aspects of running the school) and culminating in a wide range of psycho-social and affective aspects. The school is a living entity in which numerous relational networks develop between the different actors : teachers, pupils, administrative and auxiliary staff, parents etc. The democratisation process must start with this, the internal life of the school.

The classroom is a microcosm of the reality of the school as a whole. At this level, our teachers have gained good experience of the practice of active learning.

The pupil is considered to be an active subject, an actor in the learning process, and we have employed a range of active and heuristic methods with good results. Yet when we examine the teacher-pupil relationship we perceive that, despite what teachers are saying about democratising it, it remains authoritarian and directive, with little scope for pupil initiative or autonomy. Important changes remain to be made in relation to classroom practices and teacher mentality, as well as in basic and in-service teacher training.

Classroom activity is excessively focussed on cognitive activity. Moral and civic education are still insufficiently valued. The situation is similar regarding concern for pupils' socialisation. As a result, our pupils are very good at cognitive performance, but their ability to orientate themselves in the complexities of social life is fragile. Yet this is a very important aspect of school life : indeed, students have a right to the benefits of this type of training.

II. CIVICS EDUCATION - AN IMPORTANT AXIS FOR THE PEDAGOGY OF DEMOCRACY

Civics education is one of the fields where the problems associated with democratisation are very apparent - far more so, indeed, than in other sectors of teaching.

Given that civics education constitutes the principal subject of our seminar, and will be analysed at length over the next few days in papers given by renowned specialists in the field, in debates, and in the working groups, I will limit myself to sketching a few specific problems associated with the subject in the Romanian context.

1. The current situation : difficulties in civics teaching during the period of transition towards a democratic society

First of all, mention must be made of where we are starting from. Up to 1989, civics education was more or less a part of general moral education, characterised by the following main features:

- strong politicisation and ideologisation (with the code of socialist ethics and equity as its main point);
- a rift between theory and practice;
- disparity between the incantations of Marxist moral discourse and the realities of everyday life;
- demagogy, conformism, formalism and dogmatism;
- moral education conveyed by methods leaning towards the directive and the non-heuristic;
- limitation of pupils' behavioural autonomy;
- a near absence of critical thinking and individual opinion;
- the practice of a quasi-collective morality totally subordinate to rigid regulation and severe monitoring.

These stand as so many difficulties and obstacles between us and the changes we need to make in the field of civics education.

First and foremost, we must achieve a more rigorous identification of the limitations of civics education. Some progress has already been made in this regard.

Next, we must develop a strategy for change following clear objectives, and gradually eliminating the effects of moral anomie. In principle, the most important objectives are :

- transition from an imposed civic life regulated by rigidly ideologised norms, to one which is freely accepted and practised;
- transition from a quasi-collective civic life to a civic life of the individual within the community;
- eliminating the gap between theory and practice, between ideals and social reality.

2. The special nature of civics teaching

Many aspects of this subject will, no doubt, be covered over the course of our seminar. This facilitates my task, yet also makes it more difficult.

There are two points I would like to emphasise :

- civics education as a socialisation process;
- the multicultural dimension of civics education.

A great deal of research on **the socialisation of the child** demonstrates that education in general, and its various components, can be considered a process of socialisation. Civics education is no exception. On the contrary, it can be seen as a genuine, indeed a typical, form of socialisation. Through civic socialisation, the pupil "learns" to become a "citizen" and to understand the meaning of "citizenship". Time prevents us from going into detail regarding the various mechanisms of the socialisation process : identification, social learning, role-playing etc. It must, however, be noted that all of these mechanisms play an important role in civics education.

The pupil becomes a "citizen" through his or her experience of social life in the school and within the community at large. Here he learns his identity both individual and social. "Citizen" means that one is born into a society, that one belongs to a given society. This confers one's sense of identity.

Through the same process of socialisation, the pupil grasps the meaning of "citizenship" as an awareness of belonging to a society, an awareness of rights, obligations, and responsibilities. "Citizenship" is a corollary of the status of "citizen"; it is realised in public, in the community.

Civic socialisation is anticipative, in that it prepares the student for future social roles. It prepares the pupil as an agent of social change, and must convey social and civic skills such as autonomy, critical thinking, initiative, responsibility, etc., via basic values : respect for human and minority rights, respect for others, tolerance, liberty, democracy, equality etc.

A word or two on the **multicultural dimension of civics education**. Firstly, a remark on the terms "multicultural" and "intercultural". "Multicultural" is more a descriptive term, arising from a recognition of an existing state of affairs; it indicates a factual situation, the existence of different cultures. "Interculturalism" is more suggestive of interaction between different cultures, of changes within the cultures, and within the lives and dynamics of the cultures, which are interacting.

Seen from this perspective, it is perhaps preferable to speak of education in general, and civics education in particular, as having an intercultural dimension.

Intercultural education stands for respect for cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity, the free expression of cultural, religious, and ethnic traditions, the right to one's own cultural identity, the creation of equal opportunities with regard to in-class activity and interaction, opportunities for communication and co-operation in the classroom, etc.

In my opinion, the intercultural perspective in civics education obliges us to consider it in relation to three factors :

- the cultures of different countries;
- the cultures of the various minority groups within a given country;
- the cultural differences between individuals belonging to the same cultural group.

All of these aspects must be introduced both in the civics education curriculum, and in the educational methods employed.

Intercultural education should enable different groups to keep their cultural identity while interacting positively with members of other groups.

APPENDIX II
WORKSHOP REPORTS

1. REPORT OF THE ANGLOPHONE GROUP
Rapporteur: **Eric GILDER (USA)**

INTRODUCTION

We attempted to discuss (in a culturally-democratic forum) the varied challenges primary and secondary teachers face being agents of structural change in civic educational curricula in Europe. What we discovered in our lively discussion is the difficulty of defining the term, «civic education» and deciding the purpose of such an education. Further, we had some difficulty discovering how to adapt teaching or agencies to the specific cultural/national expectations (in various stages of cognitive, conative, affective and moral development) residing in widely-diverse physical and social setting of school and home. In sum, we found teachers act upon a partially-determined stage of school, with a partially-indeterminate script of subject and pedagogies.

In all this work, we sought to define how a properly-defined goal of civic education **as an ongoing process** can generate a way for each student to define, or name, herself in relation to her society in an open, systematically organic fashion. As Gramsci has described, such an organic process occurs across time, within a concrete situation, and assumes contradictions. Specifically, the old definitions that defined «civic education» in the past communist era can be thought of (somewhat ironically) as the «traditional» ideology in the East European context. In the current time of transition, the «dominant», «oppositional» and «alternative» ideologies of society that inform any definition of «civic education» are in flux. However, during our discussions it became evident that the modern mass media forms a «dominant» ideology with its pervasive channels, whether the messages are Western marketing or governmental propaganda. Thus, formal «schools» becomes a site for the creation of only an «oppositional» (or possibility a weaker «alternative») ideology of civics. Because of this uncertainty of outcome among the educative forces extant within Eastern societies, the «emergent» theory and practice of civic education is vague at best, we found.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Meeting One: Roundtable on the lecture by François Audigier, «Values and Concepts in Civic Education».

This conversation was focused on the **purposes** of civic education as determined by a particular **scene**, a scene dominated by the informal learning of students. We argued about how teachers can either adapt to this situation in their teaching strategies, or effectively oppose it in their hope to become **actors** of progressive change. The particular challenges Eastern European countries face in meeting this charge are:

1. there are not enough teachers of civics;
2. the question of whether civics should be integrated across the curricula or not has not been answered satisfactory;

3. consideration has not been paid as to whether civics is best taught via cognitive, connotative or affective pedagogical strategies; and
4. do enough civics instructors practice what they preach, i.e., do they possess a democratic ethos?

Given these difficulties, we then seriously considered the «radical» notion that civics is a subject that should not be taught in the oppressive structures of formal «school», but left to the educative functions of home and community.

Meeting Two: Roundtable on the lecture by Jiri Kotasek, «Curricula Change in Civic Education and Their Repercussions on Teaching Strategies».

In this session, focus was given on how teachers can become more effective **agencies** for change by pedagogical innovation. By exploring new teaching techniques (for both primary and secondary school students at various levels of psycho-social development) we hoped to better aid our students to become able humane **agents** of the democratic ethos in a post-industrial civil society.

Meeting Three: Roundtable on the lecture by Roy Williams. «An Examination of the Interrelationships Between Education and the Media for the Purpose of Assessing its Contribution to Civic Education».

In this discussion, it was hotly debated whether media structures (in either post-communist or late capitalist regimes) are either useful co-agencies of progressive civic educational action, or, rather, destructive competing agents with their own covert educative agendas or **purposes**. The question we faced was how civic education teachers can train students to become interactive and critical actors employing mass media for self-directed knowledge-seeking rather than passive, uncritical receptors willing to respond to any persuasive message. In this light, we agreed that «horizontal» learning (i.e., multidisciplinary and relatively unstructured) is superior for the objective of a liberally-minded civic education as compared to the highly-specialized «vertical» learning that has characterized much East European school systems. The question that remained was whether such desired non-competitive and self-directed learning can be functional within societies that are becoming more competitive and driven by external commands.

Meeting Four: Roundtable on the lecture and video by Dakmara Georgescu, «Methodological Particularities of Civic Education at School».

In the final conversation, we in the English-speaking group were hampered by the fact that the presented video (showing students assembling a newspaper as a civic classroom project) was presented in French, with technical difficulties preventing translation. Fortunately, the situation caused us to ponder a vital challenge for teachers of civic education: given the high emotions of

hope and stress in the present days among students, and the limited cognitive perceptions on the part of us all who profess knowledge, how can we then rightfully **act** with conviction when the social needs are so uncertain?

CONCLUSION

After four days of meetings both formal and informal, we all left the meeting with a sense that much had been accomplished: We had articulated with fullness the theoretical and practical challenges that face a humane civic education program, yet we were not discouraged. Indeed, we knew that to avoid the twin horns of dogmatic certainty and relativistic indeterminacy, all we need do is to struggle in our teaching towards an imperfect «truth» honestly and with the detached engagement of an agapé love for ourselves and our students. The conference helped us to achieve this ethical end, and we thank the Council of Europe for its foresight in hosting us in Timisoara.

2. REPORT OF THE BILINGUAL GROUP

Rapporteur : **Dakmara GEORGESCU** (Romania)

The bilingual group brought together participants from neighbouring East European countries (Ukraine, Moldavia, Hungary and Romania), and this specificity lent a certain flavour to its discussions.

In consequence, the group adopted the following ideas as premises for discussion :

a. The first step is to recognise the need for in-depth re-evaluation of in-school civics education, compared to pre-1989 concepts.

b. School is one of the most important factors in civics education, both through its teaching of a specific discipline geared to this end, and in its other opportunities for forging citizenship and nurturing children's moral and/or civic development.

c. It is important to pay particular attention to the specificity of the factors involved in civics education (above all the school and the media) in former communist countries, in comparison to the situation prevailing in Western ones. This specificity applies not only to the problems to be resolved, but also to the constraints on the realisation of objectives put forward for civics education.

Many "types" of conclusions emerged over the course of discussion. These were more "key concepts" than definitive statements.

I. Conclusions concerning the "contextual" and "administrative" dimensions of civics education

Participants from every country represented in the bilingual group pointed out that we are not working on a blank page when it comes to possibilities for implementing civics education in the schools. Since 1989 new **curricula** have been developed for teaching this discipline at primary and secondary levels, as have the necessary teaching materials, particularly handbooks for younger pupils and texts for secondary level. Participants repeatedly stressed the importance of civics education as a separate discipline for countries in transition, even though there is currently a real shortage of qualified teaching staff.

Textbooks and teacher's manuals provide important support for covering the official **curriculum** outlined in each country's civics education programme. Even if only one such text, open to considerable improvement in the future, exists as yet, we must recognise the importance of every initiative, with an eye to eventually finding **alternatives**.

In this context the efforts of teachers, publishers and research institutes to define the concept of **"alternative"**, and to apply strategies which should gradually overcome the limitations of the "single textbook" situation, were also remarked upon. It is a question of introducing more, and more flexible, references than those carried in textbooks, which sometimes present extremely complex, constantly changing social reality as if it were rigid and immutable.

The economic, social, and political difficulties of countries in transition often make it difficult to bridge the **gap** between plans and realistic prospects of achieving them. While there has been a degree of success in transforming the institutions of these countries, transition in the realm of values, mentalities, habits and attitudes is far from complete.

In the case of Eastern Europe, we must also remain vigilant to the real danger of repeating mistakes which the West has (to a certain extent) managed to surmount : for example in relation to the resurgence of nationalism and intensified self-assertion of minorities.

II. Conclusions concerning the "pedagogical" dimensions of civics education

The group stressed the specificity of developing a **curriculum** for civics education in the context of a society in the process of (re)discovering and (re)defining the values which animate democratic life. There was recognition that "importing" strategies and teaching materials from other countries is every bit as dangerous as rejecting international contact and exchanges of ideas in the name of self-proclaimed "national specificity".

The efforts of the Council of Europe to organise international meetings such as this one represent one of the most rewarding avenues open to the former communist countries for clarifying their own needs and strategies in the field of civics education.

Group discussion identified a number of common themes regarding civics education in the schools, the most important of these being significant **constraints** on practical possibilities for its implementation. There was also talk of how the school's prestige has deteriorated since 1989, and the growing drop-out rate in a context of increasing unemployment and other negative effects of the economic and social crisis.

This overall situation contributes, on the one hand, to the depreciation of the school as a social environment with a very strong educative role and, on the other, to the impossibility of providing those who have left school with the help they need in forging their personal development. As a result, young people are being increasingly exposed to the pernicious influences of "extracurricular" factors cultivating violence, intolerance, and the rejection of all authority.

There is a dearth of teaching materials : they will have to be developed quickly and cost-effectively.

Basic and in-service training for civics education teachers is a clear priority for countries in transition. Our working group emphasised that many acting civics teachers have neither the necessary qualifications for, nor the motivation indispensable to, the work they do.

The group also analysed, with the help of many case studies, the very specific dimensions of interculturalism in the countries of Eastern Europe, the ethnic aspect being the most important of these. Most discussions focussed on the problems of the gypsy minority and the dangers of enforced interculturalism. The role of civics education in encouraging better understanding of "the OTHER", acceptance of the differences between human beings and developing mutual tolerance, was underlined. Participants distinguished "natural"

interculturalism (as exemplified by the Banat region) from "forced" interculturalism which can produce nothing but negative results. Discussion also touched upon the relationship between the media and civics teaching in the schools, stressing the differences between media impact in the West, and in the countries of Eastern Europe where it is still (relatively) limited. This situation represents a considerable advantage, since it enables teachers and pupils to anchor their approach in fundamental cultural reference points. At the same time, media education is emerging more and more as an absolute necessity in the world we live in. Training people to be responsible producers, and consumers, of media is yet another major task for civics education in the school, including in the the former communist countries.

Another "pedagogical" aspect touched upon was that of matching pupils' ages with chosen strategies and content. Participants stressed the need to involve the various interested parties in civics education much more efficiently than is presently the case, in particular when defining aims and objectives, but also in the choice of content, methods, and specific forms of evaluation.

Over the course of group discussion, a number of important ideas on which there was real consensus emerged :

a. one must not attempt to impose things - be they ideas, values, norms or advice - on pupils;

b. it is essential to be alert to the dangers of transferring methodologies without first adapting them to the cultural specificities of the social group in question;

c. similarly, teaching strategies must be chosen on a basis of teachers' and pupils' support for method and content which give them a feeling of being able to "*do* something"; participants also emphasised the close correlation between teaching methods and activities in civics education;

d. it is also necessary to find a balance between **imparting information** on society, developing the pupil's **critical abilities**, and putting **civic attitudes** into practice; there was agreement that the role of civics education is not merely to **teach values** and familiarise pupils with **how society works** but, above all, to teach pupils how to **affirm these in practice**;

e. the importance of dialogue and debate as the foundations of communication skills in society was discussed from the perspective of the need to take account of the child's "real" personality and of the process of his moral /civic development, with a view to identifying arguments compatible with each child's particular universe.

3. REPORT OF THE FRANCOPHONE GROUP

Rapporteur : **Jean GILLMANN** (Belgium)

In accordance with participants' nationalities, discussion in the French-speaking group focussed on comparing the Romanian, Hungarian, French, Spanish and Belgian experiences.

One of the first topics broached was whether civics education ought to be presented as a separate discipline, or be treated as interdisciplinary. The latter approach appears preferable, in that civics education is concerned more with the acquisition of behaviour than of facts, and must be integrated into pupils' experience. Moreover, civics education courses have had a politicising effect on teaching in the past, leading to rejection or mistrust of the topic as such.

Current civics education syllabuses are more concerned with helping pupils to familiarise themselves with concepts, and to put them in into practice, than they are with imparting specific facts. These programmes are usually produced by school inspectors or teams of (primary or secondary level) teachers. University input is often limited to scientific supervision.

It would appear more appropriate to envisage civics education as a way of seeing, an analytical approach to experience - including teacher-pupil relations. Conceptualisation should only be brought into it gradually, over the course of the school career. In this dynamic, the pupil must be not merely the object, but also the subject, of his own education.

The latitude of this type of programme requires greater investment and creativity from teachers, who do not always have access to materials that would enable them to implement an active approach. Moreover, this concept of civics education also demands that teachers be trained, and themselves capable of reflection.

There is an enormous need for teacher training and work materials.

In all our societies, civics education requirements inevitably include a critical approach to the media, in particular television and the press.[4]

Whether manipulation of the media is explicit or implicit, the pupil must learn that one's understanding and knowledge of the world are always - like all language - a construction. School is not, therefore, a place which imparts "the truth", for such a mission is impossible. Rather, school is where one is trained in the construction of diverse languages. The pupil must be assisted in acquiring an ability to relativise the models he encounters.

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[4] Using articles not only from different newspapers but also from different countries is one way of looking at societies from the inside rather than taking an exterior view.

Pupil participation in information within the school is an exceptionally effective first-hand method for learning the basics of democracy. In effect, school is a particular instance of a social institution with its own rules for democratic functioning, but which also fulfils an educative role through the manner in which these rules are implemented. It is essential to find the time to put this consideration into practice in the school.

These were the core ideas underlying our debates.

But, in addition to these ideas, the French-speaking group was in itself an intercultural experience. Since the participants came from societies with differing histories of democracy, exchanging ideas was sometimes a complex affair. At the beginning, each wanted to relate his or her own experiences and aspirations; it wasn't until the end that dialogue on practical issues was gradually achieved. In so doing, this Council of Europe seminar contributes a building block to the construction of democracy. For even at our level, even for us adults, our democratic know-how is far from complete. Getting there is a slow and delicate process.

Finally, speaking in a personal capacity, although I suppose I am also expressing my colleagues' opinions here, this has been an enriching experience. When you've been living in the classroom for a number of years, it is sometimes difficult to be creative, to adapt to meet the challenge of intercultural civics teaching. That is why I would like to express my thanks to the Council of Europe for involving grassroots teachers in these exchanges. And, if we are to put into practice what we have learned here, neither must we forget that when it comes to educational investment, it is important to allow time for reflection, for ideas to mature.

APPENDIX III

Programme of the seminar

Friday 17 December 1993

MORNING: 9.30 a.m.

- Opening address by Mr Eugen TODORAN, Rector of the University of Timisoara, President of the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara
- Address by Mr Jacques CHEVALIER, Programme Adviser for the Council for Cultural Co-operation Project "Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: Educational and Cultural Aspects"
- Break
- Introductory speech by Professor Emil PAUN, Director of In-service Training, Ministry of Education of Romania, on the theme "The pedagogy of democracy"
- Speech by Mr Marcel TOLCEA, representing the Timisoara Intercultural Centre, on the theme "Timisoara, cultural crossroads and symbol of tolerance"

AFTERNOON: 2.30 p.m.

- Study visit to the museums of Timisoara

Saturday 18 December 1993

MORNING: 9.00 a.m.

- Lecture by Mr François AUDIGIER, Didactics Department, INRP, Paris, on the theme "values and concepts in civic education" (40 minutes)
- Debate in plenary session (20 minutes)
- Break
- Work groups (2 hours)
- Reports on group work in plenary (30 minutes)

AFTERNOON: 2.30 p.m.

- Lecture by Mr Jiri KOTASEK, Dean of the Faculty of Education of the Charles University of Prague, on the theme "Curricula changes in civics education and their repercussions on teaching strategies" (40 minutes)
- Debate in plenary session (20 minutes)
- Break
- Work groups (2 hours)
- Reports on group work in plenary (30 minutes)

Sunday 19 December 1993

MORNING: 9.00 a.m.

- Lecture by Mr Roy WILLIAMS, University of Sussex, on the theme "An examination of the interrelationship between education and the media for the purpose of assessing its contribution to civic education" (40 minutes)
- Debate in plenary session
- Work groups (2 hours)
- Reports on group work in plenary (30 minutes)

AFTERNOON: 2.30 p.m.

- Lecture by Mrs Dakmara GEORGESCU, Institute of Educational Sciences, Bucharest, on the theme "Methodological specificities of civic education at school" (1 hour)
- Presentation by Mrs Dakmara GEORGESCU of a video on the experiment in civic education underway at Timisoara (1 hour)
- Work groups (2 hours)

Monday 20 December 1993

MORNING: 9.00 a.m.

- Summary of group work
- Summing up of the seminar by Mr Cesar BIRZEA, Director of the Institute of Educational Sciences, Bucharest, General Rapporteur
- Closure of the seminar at mid-day.

ANNEXE IV/APPENDIX IV

LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS/LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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